

Western Australian Council on Homelessness

MINUTES OF MEETING

Friday 11 May 2012

Large Executive Conference Room, Level 2
Department for Child Protection
189 Royal Street, East Perth
Meeting commenced at 9:00am

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting:

Present

Mr Stanley Jeyaraj	Independent Chair
W/Professor Paul Flatau	University of Western Australia
Mr Steve Glew	Department for Child Protection
Ms Kathleen Gregory	Foundation Housing
Ms Kedy Kristal	Patricia Giles Centre
Mr Ross Kyrwood	YMCA
Ms Hilary MacWilliam	Department of Housing
Ms Judi Morris	Mental Health Commission
Mr Ramu Nardoo (proxy)	FaHCSIA
Mr Tony Pietropiccolo	Centrecare
Ms Nanette Williams	Pilbara Community Legal Service

In attendance

Ms Maureen Flynn	Department for Child Protection
Ms Sandra Flanagan	Department for Child Protection

Apologies

Mr Richard Aspinall	FaHCSIA
Ms Heather Harker	Department of Corrective Services
Mr James Hunter	Drug and Alcohol Office

2. Minutes of meeting held 9 December 2011

The minutes of the WA Council on Homelessness meeting held on 9 December 2011 were confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings. It was agreed that Mr Steve Glew would sign the December minutes as the current Chair was not a member of the Council at the time of the December meeting.

An informal meeting of the Council members was held on 13 April 2012, prior to Cabinet endorsement of the extension of term for the members. Members were provided with an update on going matters including the Specialist Homelessness Conference.

3. Business Arising

3.1 Inner City Homelessness Responses –update

Ms Flynn advised that the project is progressing well. Leah Watkins from Starfish Consulting, has been engaged to look at crisis accommodation responses in the inner city

area and how these are supported by mainstreams mental health services. The project should be completed by October 2012.

3.2 Homelessness Conference - update

Ms Flynn advised that there have been 355 registrations to date. All WACH members will be attending as will all the key stakeholder departments.

The Chair has agreed to MC the Conference.

Dr Flatau, Mr Pietropiccolo and Mr Kyrwood will represent WACH on a Panel following a keynote presentation by Ms Sue Cripps, Director Homelessness, Mental Health, Disability, Catholic Community Services (NSW/ACT).

My Kyrwood will also be representing WACH as a co-presenter of Session 9 – Local Solutions: Regional Homelessness Planning in Western Australia.

Action: Ms Flanagan to forward a copy of Ms Sue Cripps' paper as background information prior to the Conference to Panel members.

3.3 National Quality Framework – update

Ms Flynn advised that FaHCSIA has engaged consultants to review the standards identifying consistencies and gaps across the jurisdictions.

Mr Michael King, Accordwest, is on the NQF Sector Reference Group, representing the WA sector. It was suggested that Mr King be invited to the next WACH meeting to enable WACH members to provide input into the development of the Framework. Ms Flynn advised that Mr King has agreed to receive any comments and forward to the Reference Group. This group is chaired by FaHCSIA.

Ms Flynn provided the following documents that had been provided to the Sector Reference Group for member's information:

- Attachment 3 – Draft Charter
- Attachment 4 – Charter
- Attachment 5 - Principles for Complaints Mechanism

The NQF Options paper proposed four models, however, a further two models have now been proposed by the NQF sub-group that enable standards to be assessed through the contract management process, or through existing jurisdictional established quality assurance mechanisms. These new options build on existing processes that are already in place in many jurisdictions, including in WA, and could be implemented without undue additional financial burden.

Action: Ms Flanagan to invite Mr King to the next WACH meeting.

4. Guest Speakers – Mr Francis Lynch and Ms Katie Curo, Ruah Community Services - Vocational Inclusion Project

The Chair welcomed Mr Lynch and Ms Curo to the meeting.

Mr Lynch provided members with a brief background to the project. The project was initiated in 2010/2011 after obtaining funding through the Social Innovation Grants (Communities) from the State Government. The aim is to develop a consistent process of

providing pathways to vocational education and employment for all clients, across all of Ruahs services. Social inclusion and sustainability are overarching goals. The 'innovation' is changing perceptions about employment, and its benefits, and incorporating employment pathways into support models. Clients may choose not to take the employment path, but it should be offered to them.

Ms Curo provided a detailed overview. The following points were made:

- The Model is built around client choice, with no time limits. Belief that people are job ready when they say they are, rather than once they have completed 'job ready' training.
- Where rapid job placement and rapid access to housing has occurred clients are more likely to sustain longer term housing tenancies.
- The importance of ensuring all Ruah staff and services have the knowledge and ability to use a consistent approach.
- Developing an employment version of Ruahs Wellness Recovery Action Program (WRAP).
- Culture shift – well resourced 'employment' system that is not being utilised - how do we reconnect and make the shift to engage people in the system? Support will be provided to the different groups to make the change required.
- Members queried the impact it will have for clients – it will be compared with past outcomes to understand the difference it has made. The pathways can be quite different for individuals.
- Connection to business - one to one with business is a more direct path to employment, they are working to build relationships, developing mechanisms to engage with employers.
- Members discussed the importance of careful measurement of outcomes and ensuring the system is not setup in isolation of other employment services.

Action: Ms Flanagan to distribute the link to this presentation with the minutes.
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5. Update from Department of Housing

Ms MacWilliam advised that 70 tenancies were allocated in April, bringing the total to 637 to date. This equates to approximately 1335 people housed through the NPAH.

A Ministerial Roundtable was held last month to consider where the opportunities are for creating new incentives for increasing both rental and housing affordability. The State Affordable Housing Strategy is a keynote presentation at the Homelessness Conference later this month. This is being updated to reflect the outcomes from the Roundtable. An important aspect of the Roundtable is the work being undertaken with partners, including the inclusion of other government agencies to look at planning and regional and state development; and the role of the non-government sector in supporting people in housing.

The Department of Housing will also present papers at the Conference on:

- The Disruptive Behaviour policy. Ms MacWilliam reiterated that this is policy not legislation and to date has accounted for approximately 1% of evictions, in a pool of over 36,000 tenancies State-wide. A budget request has been made, in the current State budget process, to establish a more specialised to assist people who obtain strikes.
- The Tenants Support Services Review, which is changing from an output driven process to an outcome based process for individual tenancies.

- The National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness, progress to date, incorporating all key agencies involved.
- Aboriginal Visitor's Centres.

Finally, the Department for Housing will host an interactive workshop titled *My Tenancy- My Home*, which is a new model developed by the Department in partnership with remote communities for tenancy management in those remote communities.

A member queried a report by researchers at UWA comparing the Department of Housing and Community Housing agencies.

Members discussed the transfer of housing to the community sector. This has been put on hold to some extent while Treasury examine the outcomes of delivery. The next transfer of assets will involve the State Balance Sheet involving in situ transfers of existing tenants. A great deal of work is involved including policy development. An update on this issue was requested at a future meeting.

The Chair asked if a brief summary of the Housing report can be provided with the minutes.

Action: An update on the progress of the transfer of housing to the community sector be included on a future agenda.

6. Development of Regional Plans to Reduce Homelessness

6.1 Update on progress

Ms Flanagan advised that the first progress reports are now being received. A full report should be possible at a future meeting.

6.2 Sharepoint Extranet concept

Ms Flanagan advised that the project is progressing well. The steering group has developed a proposed structure for the website which is being discussed with consumer groups to ensure it is relevant to their needs.

7. Future Discussions

7.1 Fair Work Australia

Mr Glew advised that this is yet to be resolved.

7.2 Homelessness Research Conference

Dr Flatau to provide feedback at the next meeting.

Action: Ms Flanagan to source a briefing paper from WACOSS on the Fairwork Australia case and distribute to members.
Dr Flatau to provide an update on the Homelessness Research Conference.

8. General Business

8.1 Parity - December edition

The editor of Parity, Mr Noel Murray, will provide a brief overview of Parity and the December edition, which will focus on Western Australia, at the Homelessness Conference. The *Call for Contributions* will be distributed at the Conference and it is anticipated that some of the presentations may be converted into articles for the Western Australian edition. Mr Murray will be available for questions throughout the Conference.

8.2 Meeting Dates

Mr Glew asked for support of members to change the meeting day to Wednesday. There was general agreement that the first Wednesday of each month would be suitable. The change in day/date will take place from July.

Resolution: Meeting dates to be changed from a Friday to a Wednesday. Dates to be confirmed.

Action: Ms Flanagan to circulate dates, members to advise if the dates are not suitable.

8.3 Other business

8.3.1 Funding announcement

Mr Glew advised that the Premier announced the release of the State portion of the homelessness Component 1 funding at the WACOSS Conference last week. More detail will be available next week. This will be back dated to July 1 last year.

Mr Glew announced that he has received the Federal appropriations for the coming year. There is a 1.8% growth factor in the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA), and it also shows that the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH) has no funding beyond June 30, 2013. The Department of Treasury will negotiate with the Commonwealth seeking ongoing NPAH funding. WA is seeking to have the money continue and be rolled over into the NAHA budget allocation. The Minister is fully informed and will write to the Ministers for Housing and the Treasurer to ensure a united position in discussions with the Commonwealth.

Members discussed incorporating non-government agency input into the submission to the Commonwealth. Mr Glew and Mr Pietropiccolo agreed to meet to discuss means of non-government involvement in lobbying the Commonwealth to commit to continued funding.

Members also discussed the Federal indexation amount, well below the States 4%, and is in effect reducing the net value of program funding.

Action: Mr Glew and Mr Pietropiccolo to meet to discuss the above issues and means of incorporating NGO views. Mr Glew to pass on members views to the Minister.

8.3.2 Registry Week

Ms MacWilliam advised that Registry Week is proceeding, being undertaken by Ruah in partnership with the Cities of Perth and Vincent and with support from the Department of Housing and the Department for Child Protection. It is a count of homeless people as a registry event. This has been done in the US, Queensland and Melbourne. Volunteers begin at about 3am and use a vulnerability index go through a series of questions with each homeless person. This will take place in the second week of August. WACH will be provided with an overview of the process and outcomes after that time.

An invitation to be extended to Ruah to attend a future meeting to provide an overview.

Action: Ms Flanagan to organise a guest speaker for Ruah on this topic for the September meeting.

9. Next Meeting

The Chair thanked members for their attendance and closed the meeting at 10:35am. The next meeting will be held on Friday 8 June, 2012 at 9am.